

**GUIDELINE G-2**  
**(formerly 13-02)**

**Spills Action Centre Operations**

**Legislative Authority:**

*Environmental Protection Act, RSO 1990, Part X*  
*Ontario Water Resources Act, RSO 1990*  
*Pesticides Act, RSO 1990*

**Responsible Director:**

Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Operations Division

**Last Revision Date:**

April, 1994

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## **SYNOPSIS**

The primary purpose of this guideline is to outline and describe the operations of the Ministry's Spills Action Centre (SAC). The Spills Action Centre commenced operations on November 29, 1985, the same day Part X of the *Environmental Protection Act* came into force.

### **1.0 Spills Action Centre Functions**

The Ministry's Spills Action Centre (SAC) was established to:

- (a) maintain a province-wide, toll-free service for receiving, evaluating and initiating responses to notifications of spills and other urgent environmental matters on a 24-hour basis;
- (b) serve as a provincial focal point for activities dealing with spills and related emergencies;
- (c) liaise with other agencies on spills and related emergencies;
- (d) maintain a provincial spill database for the Ministry; and,
- (e) provide contingency planning functions and related spill response training.

### **2.0 Appropriate Response Action**

SAC staff are required to evaluate all occurrences reported to them and to decide on the appropriate action to be taken, with the assistance of SAC Operating Procedure Cards (see Section 3.0).

Such actions typically include the following:

- (a) contacting the owner of a suspected pollution source in an attempt to verify and resolve the problem;
- (b) initiating Ministry field response by contacting Environmental/Emergency Response Staff if required;
- (c) contacting other agencies as required (e.g., police, fire department, ambulance, Coast Guard, Canutec, municipalities, U. S. authorities);
- (d) notifying senior management of serious incidents and co-ordinating information flow with the Public Affairs and Communications Branch;
- (e) establishing contact with the Minister regarding major spills and preparing direction and orders for the Minister's consideration, and conveying directions or orders from the Minister as necessary;

- (f) ensuring that potentially affected parties are notified/warned;
- (g) liaising with, and providing support for, agencies in charge when a spill involves an emergency situation;
- (h) providing information on chemicals and clean-up techniques to Ministry staff and others; and,
- (i) recording details of complaints and/or incidents and forwarding them to relevant District Offices or other agencies for response during normal business hours.

Regardless of what action is initiated, all occurrences reported to SAC are documented and tracked on the Ministry's Occurrence Reporting Information System (ORIS).

### **3.0 Operating Procedures Updating**

SAC Operating Procedure Cards, which are routinely updated, contain decision process guidelines for co-ordinating responses and for notifying other agencies, as required.

### **4.0 Spill Records**

SAC is responsible for maintaining spill records for the Ministry. It is the responsibility of all Ministry staff who may receive a report of a spill from a discharger, municipal authorities or others to advise SAC as quickly as possible of the event. SAC Environmental Officers enter all spill occurrences on ORIS. SAC prepares annual spill summaries and other summaries as required.

### **5.0 Contingency Planning**

SAC spill contingency planning activities include:

- (a) interagency spill response co-ordination;
- (b) municipal and industrial spill contingency planning advisory services;
- (c) spill response advisory services; and,
- (d) staff training and participation in spill training courses and exercises.